

NVCOG Investigates Route 67 for Oxford Main Street Study

OXFORD — The Oxford Main Street Study is investigating the potential for bicycle, pedestrian and transit improvement along Route 67 in Oxford.

The study is funded by the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments with federal transportation planning funds and is being conducted by TranSystems Corporation, a planning and engineering consultant with office in Meriden. The Oxford Main Street Committee, formed in 2017, is overseeing it.

Oxford currently does not have a typical walkable New England downtown or Main Street. Instead, municipal and commercial areas are dispersed along with residences along State Route 67. Although Route 67 is fundamentally Oxford's "Main Street," it currently has no sidewalks or any safe bicycle or pedestrian access and traf-

fic speeds are excessive with no visual cues to alert motorists that they are driving through an area where they may encounter walkers or bicyclists.

In addition, no public transit is operated along Route 67 that could provide residents an alternative transportation option. Transit options by train or Metro North and by bus on CT Transit are available only one mile from the Oxford town line, but there is no way for Oxford residents to safely access these services without a personal motor vehicle.

The town has prioritized creating more of a downtown aesthetic along Route 67 and the Oxford Main Street Committee has been investigating streetscape improvements, sidewalks and trails within the corridor to improve non-motorized access.

The study will build on the committee's prior work to devel-

op a cohesive plan for the entire corridor to better enable the town to plan, prioritize and fund future improvements.

TranSystem will be using existing data and data collected during the study to assess the potential to develop pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure along Route 67. The focus of these potential improvements will be to improve connections and transportation options to the Seymour sidewalk network, train station and Naugatuck River Greenway Trail to the south, and the Larkin Bridle Trail to the north, as well as to all of the businesses, services, green spaces and residential areas within the corridor.

The potential for transit service in the corridor will also be studied, focusing on connections to services and major residential and commercial centers and to surrounding communities.

"This project is something the residents of Oxford have said they want and because of this Oxford Main Street Study we will have the guidelines to make it happen," said Kathleen O'Neil, Oxford grant administrator and chair of the Oxford Main Street Committee. "This study will be instrumental in providing the

most aesthetically pleasing and beneficial plan for walkways and linear parks along Route 67."

The Oxford Main Street Study kicked off in December and is expected to take 18 months to complete. There will be numerous opportunities for residents and businesses to provide input to the study. The study team will be holding two public information meetings to present their findings and solicit input. Residents can also expect to see the team staffing information booths at public events in Oxford.

"We are very enthusiastic about the Oxford Main Street Project," said First Selectman George Temple. "I want to thank the Oxford Main Street Committee for their vision and hard work that made this project a reality. I believe it will enhance the charm of Oxford and provide a transfor-

mation and charm to our beautiful town. I am grateful for the dedication of the NVCOG staff and of course to my fellow selectmen and mayors of NVCOG for their generous support."

TranSystem Project Manager Casey Hardin called the project a "tremendous opportunity to build off the work that the Main Street Committee has completed over the last several years. We are aiming to create a multimodal master plan to the corridor that can encourage sustainable transportation and growth in the Town for years to come."

Those seeking learn of meeting dates, documents and additional information may visit the study webpage at www.nvco.org/current-projects-transportation-planning-studies/oxford-main-street-study/.